IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

--A slice decoder control circuit ~~(46), having received the input of a parameter of~~

~~a picture layer,~~ sequentially supplies the parameter of the picture layer and the write pointer of a

first slice ~~1 to a slice decoder (47)~~to a first slice decoder, the parameter of the picture layer and

the write pointer of a second slice ~~2 to a slice decoder (48)~~to a second slice decoder, and the

parameter of the picture layer and the write pointer of a ~~slice 3 to a slice decoder (49)~~third slice

to a third slice decoder, and causes the slice decoders to decode the respective parameters and

write pointers. On the basis of the input of signals indicating the completion of decoding

processing inputted from the slice decoders ~~(47) to (49)~~, the slice decoder control circuit ~~(46)~~

~~supplies~~supplies the write pointer of a fourth slice ~~4 to the slice decoder (48)~~to the second

decoder and causes the second slice decoder ~~(48)~~ to decode the write pointer at timing A, and

supplies the write pointer of a fifth slice ~~5 to the slice decoder (49)~~to the third decoder and causes

the third slice decoder ~~(49)~~ to decode the write pointer at timing B. Subsequently, the similar

processing is repeated until the last slice is decoded. The operations of a plurality of slice

decoders are thus controlled.--